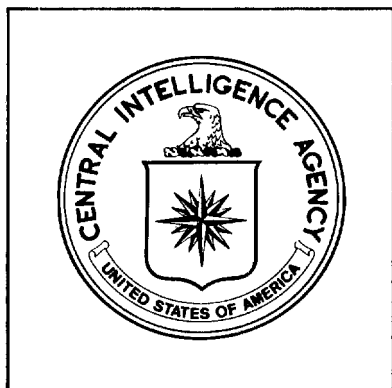


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Latin America

REGIONAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

DIA review(s) completed.

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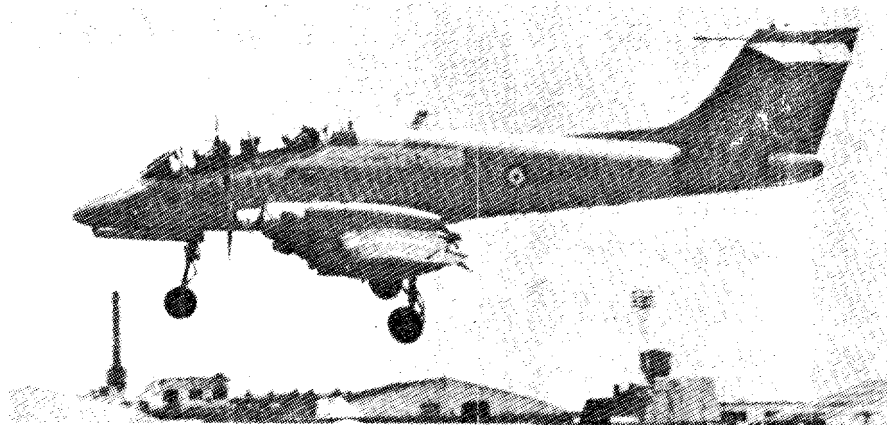
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Argentina: Pucara's Paris Preview

2, 3 Argentina exhibited its IA-58 Pucara counterinsurgency aircraft at the recent Paris Air Show, marking the first time this plane has been outside South America. This display underscores Argentina's desire to export this aircraft.

3 The Pucara is the only military plane of national design in production in Argentina, and it is the pride of the Argentine aircraft industry. The Pucara is a two-seat turboprop best suited for close air support missions. It is similar in capabilities and role to the US OV-10 Bronco. The Pucara carries 1,500 kilograms of bombs and ammunition, and has two 20 mm. cannons and four 7.62 mm. machine guns. The aircraft can land and take off from 400 meter long unimproved runways.

1, 3 The Argentine air force received its first Pucaras in mid-1976 and some 15 planes have been built to date. The air force has ordered 45, but the total production run--largely dependent on sales abroad--could be as high as 100 before the end of 1979.



Pucara

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3 The Argentines have reportedly demonstrated the Pucara in Paraguay and Bolivia, and Peru, Libya, and South Africa have expressed interest in the plane. No contracts for export have yet been signed. The Pucara is an ideal aircraft for many third world countries. It is cheaper than high-performance jets, and its slow speed and loiter capability make it well-suited to counter guerrilla bands as well as conventional ground units.

3 The Pucara is representative of the growing Argentine arms industry which manufactures a variety of armaments: heavy automatic weapons, mortars, and rockets. Argentina is also developing a tank based on a West German design and has a modern industrial base from which to expand its armaments industry for export. It is increasingly vying with Brazil to supply weapons to different Latin American states.

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Mexico: Further Developments in the Military's Anti-Narcotics Role

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2 The Mexican army has temporarily downgraded Operation Condor I, a special military task force assembled to augment the government's anti-narcotics program, by replacing the commander, General Hernandez Toledo, with a lower ranking officer. According to the US army attache, the new commander, Colonel Valazquez Cardona, has only 800 men under his control--300 less than when Condor I first went into operation over six months ago. In addition, the amount of airlift support provided to the military by the attorney general's office has been greatly reduced.

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2 It is likely that from September to November--when the poppy harvest season is at its height--the task force will be augmented considerably and may even be placed under a new commander. In the interim, Condor troops will concentrate mainly on patrolling the countryside to check for movement of narcotics and to ensure that campesinos are not replanting crops killed by the herbicide spray. The task force is likely to play an increased role in the visual detection of crops and the verification of their destruction--particularly if the attorney general remains firm in his decision to cancel the Multispectral Opium Poppy Sensor (MOPS), an aerial photographic and analysis system used in northern Mexico.

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2 Changes have also occurred in the 9th military zone command in Culiacan, the most troublesome illegal narcotics area in the Condor I jurisdiction. The new commander is General Quintanar Lopez. He replaced General Garcia Rojas, an honest but brash and politically indiscreet officer, who ran afoul of the Mexican bureaucracy by continually failing to coordinate military drug operations with the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (MFJP), which he regarded as corrupt and unprofessional. Furthermore, Garcia earned the enmity of the governor of Sinaloa and other state and national politicians by deploying

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Mexican Military's Continuing Anti-Narcotics Role



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troops in a "repressive" manner to patrol a rich suburb of Culiacan renowned as an enclave for untouchable narcotics executives.

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2 The new 9th zone commander is reputed to be one of the toughest and most experienced narcotics fighters in the Mexican army. Quintanar's appointment to the "drug capital" of Sinaloa may be a reflection of the army's desire to maintain stability in the attractive tourist state. The tourist industry, an important revenue earner for the Mexican economy, has been adversely affected by press reports of narcotics related violence and gangland murders.

None of the changes seems to indicate a diminution of the military's role in Mexico's anti-narcotics program. Several factors point to success in the overall drug control program thus far, and if anything, that very success will call for even more military participation in the future.

1 As more campesinos are forced into the cities in the wake of destroyed poppy fields, the threat of social unrest increases; as more traffickers compete for diminishing supplies of opium there is a possibility of increased violence. In either event, military troops are likely to play an expanded role.

✓ There have also been reports that poppy fields are appearing in Sonora State and other areas in Mexico outside the traditional poppy-growing belt. Provided there is no slackening of the herbicide spray program, growers will continue to move to new cultivation sites. This in turn will entail expanded participation by the army.

2 A successful anti-drug campaign aimed at reduction of supplies is at best temporary and usually does little more than change the cast of characters and the setting. The narcotics program in Mexico is at the point now where traffickers are being forced to look for innovations to keep one step ahead of the authorities again.

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